



Doing Business in Bolivia

A Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies

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Chapter 1: Doing Business in Bolivia

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Market Overview

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Bolivia remains a difficult place to do business. Economic activity in recent years has often been disrupted by social unrest resulting from centuries of economic, political, and social inequality, and indigenous, labor, and anti-globalization organizations have recently targeted private investment – particularly foreign investment – as the cause of many of the country's ills. Political violence, while rare, can escalate quickly.

Bolivia is South America's poorest and least industrialized country. The hydrocarbons and mining sectors drive the economy, which grew 4 percent in 2005, its fastest rate of expansion since 1998. Gross domestic product (GDP) totaled an estimated USD 8.5 billion in 2005, up slightly from USD 8.2 billion the previous year. Inflation remains low, at approximately 5 percent in 2005.

Bolivia remains highly dependent on capital and consumer goods imports and foreign direct investment (FDI). The United States is Bolivia's largest single investor – accounting for an average of 35 percent of net FDI inflows of USD 5.6 billion between 1996 and 2003 – and one of Bolivia's leading trading partners, importing goods worth USD 331 million and exporting merchandise worth USD 257 million in 2004. These figures represent approximately 15 and 13.7 percent, respectively, of Bolivia's total exports and imports. Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela are also important trading partners.

Market Challenges

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Bolivia generally welcomes foreign investment, but social unrest, the lack of judicial security, arbitrary regulatory decisions, widespread corruption among public officials, cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, and political pressure to abrogate contracts may adversely affect operations.

Near-term investments may also be affected by potential policy changes under President Evo Morales, who took office January 22, 2006. During the 2005 presidential campaign, Morales pledged to nationalize natural resources, move away from market-oriented economic policies, and empower Bolivia's indigenous population, promising to convene a mid-2006 Constituent Assembly to rewrite the country's constitution. While the administration's public statements indicate a possible leftward shift in social and economic policies, its official positions remain unclear.

Market Opportunities

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Absent significant changes to Bolivia's legal framework, some of which may be proposed by an expected mid-2006 Constituent Assembly, the best prospects for U.S. investors are in the hydrocarbons and mining sectors.

The August 2002 Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA) generated new investment opportunities in textiles, which now enjoy duty-free access to U.S. markets, subject to an annual regional cap. In April 2003, the Bolivian Government announced a plan to take greater advantage of ATPDEA, especially in the textiles and wood products industries. Since then, exports have hit record highs, and thousands of jobs have been created.

Many Bolivians hope to boost exports still further by joining the proposed Andean Free Trade Agreement, but while previous governments have shown great interest in the agreement, the official position of the Morales administration is not yet known.

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Companies considering doing business in Bolivia should carefully weigh the advantages and risks of potential investments, conduct extensive due diligence before committing funds, and retain competent Bolivian legal and other counsel.

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Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment

For background information on Bolivia's political and economic environment, please click on the link below to access the U.S. Department of State's Background Note.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35751.htm>

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Using an Agent or Distributor

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Foreign firms typically hire local agents or distributors or establish local subsidiaries or branches, often in one or more of the major cities of La Paz, Santa Cruz, and Cochabamba.

Government tenders require local representation. Agents must register with the National Chamber of Commerce, the Internal Revenue Service, the Vice Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Fundaempresa, and the local municipality. To register, agents must present a letter or agreement appointing them as representatives. The document must clearly indicate the contract's period of validity, the sales area covered by the agent (be it national or regional), the agreement's financial terms, and whether the foreign firm has the right to appoint other agents in other areas of Bolivia.

Establishing an Office

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Bolivia's Commercial Code defines the following business entities:

- stock company or corporation (S.A.): a company in which common capital consists of transferable shares and in which the liability of each stockholder is limited to the number of shares taken. Management is the responsibility of the corporation's board of directors, which is comprised of three to twelve directors (who may be shareholders) elected by stockholders. Business may be conducted by one or more shareholders, or by third parties appointed for this purpose for a limited period as indicated in company by-laws.
- limited liability company (S.R.L.): a company in which the liability of each partner is limited to the amount invested. There may be between two and 25 partners. Capital shares must be paid in full at the time of incorporation.
- general partnership (S.C.): a company in which partners have both joint and individual liability.

- limited partnership: a company consisting of one or more general partners, jointly responsible as ordinary partners, and one or more limited partners who are not liable for the debts of the partnership beyond the sum contributed as capital to common stock.
- joint stock company: a company whose partners are liable for obligations as ordinary partners, while limited partners incur no liability beyond the number of shares held.
- temporary association for commercial purposes without formal partnership: a short-term agreement in which two or more persons unite for one or more transitory or particular operations.
- branch of a foreign company/sole proprietorship: a wholly owned subsidiary of a foreign firm.

Foreign firms wishing to establish a subsidiary should allow four to eight months to complete the process. The company's statutes must be notarized and published in a local newspaper, and operating approval must be obtained from the Internal Revenue Service, the Secretary of Industry and Commerce, and the local municipality.

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Bolivia has no specific legislation regarding franchising, but there are clear rules governing its operation. A foreign firm wishing to grant a franchise in Bolivia must first register the brand name with the National Intellectual Property Service (SENAPI), after which it may grant a franchise to a local company through a contract specifying terms of mutual agreement.

Franchise operations have become popular in the last few years, mostly in fast food services, delivery services, language centers, and clothing and drug stores. For more information, interested parties should contact the following:

Bolivian Franchise Association
Calle Yanacocha esq. Mariscal Santa Cruz
Edificio Casanovas, Piso 6, Oficina 606
La Paz, Bolivia
Phone/Fax: (591-2) 215-2094

Direct Marketing

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Direct marketing among certain institutions is fairly well established, but information databases are generally not available. Commercial information can be obtained through local chambers of commerce, local trade associations, and the U.S. Embassy's commercial section.

Joint Ventures/Licensing

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Bolivian law defines a joint venture as a specific business venture carried out by two or more parties with separate legal licenses. Each party is liable for debts according to the relevant ownership percentage, with separate business interests unaffected unless specifically stated in the agreement.

Foreign and domestic corporations and/or individuals may enter into joint venture agreements. While foreign companies are not required to possess local legal licenses in advance, they must be able to demonstrate legal status in their countries of origin. The Investment Law (Law 1182, 1990) governs the operations of joint ventures, and Supreme Decree 22526 (dated June 13, 1990) lays out implementing regulations.

Selling to the Government

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Government expenditures account for a significant portion of Bolivia's GDP. National, state, and municipal governments and other public entities are important buyers of machinery, equipment, materials, and services.

In 1994, the Bolivian Government launched the "Popular Participation Program," which required a fixed percentage of federal revenues to be passed with relatively few conditions to the country's 300 local and regional governments, giving municipalities much more flexibility in directing government expenditures toward their most pressing needs. Numerous programs and oversight mechanisms exist to assist in administering these resources.

The Bolivian Government revised purchasing rules in Supreme Decree 27328 (dated January 31, 2004). Government purchases (except insurance contracts) under USD 20,000 may be made through direct invitation and price comparisons, with a minimum of three quotes. The government is legally required to issue tenders for purchases between USD 20,000 and USD 1,000,000, with importers of foreign goods allowed to participate only when locally manufactured products and service providers are unavailable or when the government fails to award a contract. The government can call for international bids only when purchases are between USD 1,000,000 and USD 5,000,000. Suppliers submitting bids for purchases over USD 5,000,000 must comply with prerequisites established in bidding documents exclusive to each purchase.

Bid specifications containing technical and commercial requirements are available through the relevant government entity and are published in local media and at <http://www.sicoes.gov.bo/nuevosicoes/index.htm>. Qualifying procedures and award decisions are determined by the chief executive officer of the public entity involved. Domestic goods and services providers receive a 10 to 15 percent preference, depending on the bid, to encourage local industrial development. Both the price and quality of the product or service are considered when awarding contracts.

Tenders for national security purchases for the armed forces or for any other goods or services of national interest may be issued with no limit in value.

World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) projects involve additional requirements. Tenders are issued under the rules of each organization.

Distribution and Sales Channels

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Because Bolivia is landlocked, merchandise must be delivered by air or deposited in seaports in Chile, Peru, Brazil, or Argentina and transported overland. Occasional bad

weather, roadblocks, and port congestion can complicate overland delivery and may make air transportation preferable even for heavy items.

Bolivia's population is majority urban, with 69 percent of all inhabitants living in the cities of La Paz/El Alto (29 percent), Santa Cruz (22 percent), and Cochabamba (18 percent). Many companies locate in La Paz, with sales agents in the other two major cities. Santa Cruz is also an attractive base, particularly given its position as one of Bolivia's major economic centers.

Many goods are distributed through the informal economy, in which hundreds of thousands of Bolivians engage in merchandising, usually in small facilities or as street vendors. Many wholesalers import directly and then distribute goods through retail outlets in major cities or through informal channels. A majority of the retail establishments are small, often family-owned operations.

Selling Factors/Techniques

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Price and quality are important factors in all sales. To be effective, advertising and sales materials must be in Spanish.

Trade Promotion and Advertising

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Seven advertising agencies operate in La Paz, among them GRAMMA, Ltda., Nexus, SMART (McCann-Ericsson), Ltda., and J. Walter Thompson. Advertising agencies generally charge a 15 percent negotiable commission. For more information, interested parties should contact the La Paz Chamber of Advertising Agencies:

Cámara Paceña de Empresas de Publicidad (CAPEP)
Calle Lisímaco Gutiérrez No. 513
La Paz, Bolivia
E-mail: capep@megalink.com

Radio

Bolivia's 477 radio stations reach even the most isolated areas of Bolivia, where electricity is often unavailable. Radio is particularly effective in reaching rural populations, as many programs are broadcast in the two dominant native languages, Aymara and Quechua.

Television

Television has become increasingly available in rural areas and can be found in almost all urban homes. All television stations are privately held except for one government-owned station and several belonging to major state universities. While several networks broadcast throughout the country, only the government station is considered truly "national" since it alone broadcasts to all areas of Bolivia.

Access to cable television is limited. Two firms, Supercanal and Multivisión, serve approximately 30,000 households, with packages offering South American feeds from

major world networks (CNN, BBC, MTV, Nickelodeon, and others) and Latin American, European, and U.S. programming.

Newspapers

Major La Paz newspapers have a combined daily circulation of between 30,000 and 80,000 copies. The principal La Paz newspapers (*La Razon*, *La Prensa*, and *El Diario*) circulate nationally, as do the major newspapers from Santa Cruz (*El Deber* and *El Mundo*) and Cochabamba (*Los Tiempos*).

Market Research

Along with PricewaterhouseCoopers and KPMG, several foreign market research firms operate locally. All market research and consulting companies must register with the National Chamber of Consulting Companies:

Cámara Nacional de Empresas Consultoras (CANEC)
Avenida 6 de Agosto No. 2464
Edificio Los Jardines, Oficina 5D
La Paz, Bolivia
Phone: (591-2) 244-3819
Fax: (591-2) 244-3819

Pricing

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Except in limited circumstances, markets determine prices. The Bolivian Government imposes price controls only on petroleum products, which are regulated by the Superintendent of Hydrocarbons. Municipal governments determine the prices of garbage collection services and, with the Superintendent of Basic Services, the price of potable water.

Sales Service/Customer Support

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U.S. products often enjoy competitive advantages in terms of price, quality, reputation, and customer support. Customer service and technical and maintenance support often exceed the services provided by Bolivian firms.

Protecting Intellectual Property

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Intellectual property rights (IPR) protection falls well short of U.S. and international standards, and enforcement is inconsistent at best. For additional information, please see chapter six.

Due Diligence

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U.S. businesses considering investing in Bolivia should investigate potential clients, associates, and partners before entering into agreements. The U.S. Embassy's commercial section offers International Company Profiles (ICP) that may help U.S. firms verify the reliability of potential clients or partners. For more information, please see chapter ten.

Local legal counsel is highly recommended, particularly when establishing a local subsidiary or registering brand names. A complete list of general, patent, and commercial attorneys is available through the U.S. Embassy's commercial section and at <http://bolivia.usembassy.gov/english/consular/attorney.htm>.

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Hydrocarbons: Overview

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Bolivia possesses approximately 47.8 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of natural gas reserves, the second largest in South America, and more than 856 million barrels of proven and probable reserves of crude oil. Increased activity in the hydrocarbons sector is due to three principal events: passage of progressive hydrocarbons legislation in 1996; the reconstitution of Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB), the state hydrocarbons company; and completion of the Bolivia-Brazil pipeline in 1999.

YPFB generally enters into joint venture contracts for a limited period of time (usually 40 years) with private companies. YPFB also administers a general sales agreement with Brazil's state-owned oil company, Petrobras.

Investors should note that the May 2005 Hydrocarbons Law (Law 3058) required companies to migrate to new contracts within 180 days, imposed an additional 32 percent tax on revenues, and required producers to relinquish all hydrocarbons to the state, losing ownership of production at the wellhead and greatly reducing the value of company assets. Under the law, companies are no longer free to commercialize their own products. Instead, they must sell all hydrocarbons through YPFB, which charges a service fee. Companies must satisfy the domestic market before exporting, and they must contend with artificially low domestic prices set by the Superintendent of Hydrocarbons. As of October 2005, seven hydrocarbons companies, including three U.S. firms, had threatened to pursue international arbitration under their countries' bilateral investment treaties with Bolivia.

Best Products/Services

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The best sales prospects involve natural gas exploration, drilling, and production machinery, equipment, and techniques.

Opportunities

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The discovery of massive natural gas reserves presents several investment opportunities for foreign firms. Among them are:

- Liquefied natural gas (LNG): several companies have investigated the possibility of exporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) via a Pacific port to southern California and/or Mexico. The USD 5 billion Pacific Liquefied Natural Gas (PLNG) project was stopped, however, because of social concerns about exporting through Chile. The Bolivian Government is pursuing the development of gas export projects through Peru, though increased transportation costs and uncertain markets may make any Peruvian export route unfeasible.
- Gas-to-liquids (GTL): several foreign firms have expressed interest in deploying gas-to-liquids technologies (GTL) to produce synthetic diesel fuel. Proposals range from a 10,000 barrel per day (bpd) plant to meet domestic demand to 50,000-100,000 bpd plants for export. Bolivian gas is uniquely suited to GTL applications due to its extremely low sulfur content.
- Petrochemicals: Brazilian oil companies have been studying the possibility of constructing a USD 1.4 billion petrochemicals plant in Bolivia. If built, the plant would have the capacity to produce 100,000 tons of polyethylene for the Bolivian market and 500,000 tons for export to Brazil.
- Fertilizers: two groups are considering the construction of a urea fertilizer plant on the Bolivia-Brazil border. Both countries offer potential markets.
- Exploration/drilling/production: exploration and drilling for natural gas could continue to be an important part of the Bolivian economy, but many companies have left the country because of minimal demand for pipeline and drilling services. We do not expect demand to rebound in the short-term.

Mining: Overview

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Mining remains one of Bolivia's most important economic activities. Despite more than 500 years of work, estimates suggest that only 10 percent of Bolivia's mineral resources have been exploited. Principal metals and industrial minerals include gold, silver, nickel, antimony, copper, zinc, lead, tin, sulfur, potassium, lithium, borax, and semi-precious stones. Mining accounts for approximately half of Bolivia's exports (an estimated USD 1.2 billion of total exports of USD 2 billion in 2005), and several U.S. firms are either engaged in or contemplating major silver, gold, zinc, and iron ore projects.

The Bolivian Government began opening the mining industry to private investment in the 1980s. Lands previously held by the Bolivian Mining Corporation (COMIBOL) are open to joint venture or leasing contracts.

Best Products/Services

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The private sector today purchases virtually all mining equipment imports. The best sales prospects involve medium-sized open pit mines and small- and medium-sized alluvial gold mining operations. For medium-sized open pit operations, the best prospects include drills, crushers and pulverizers, conveyors, compressors, front-loaders, bulldozers, 15- to 30-ton heavy-duty trucks, gravimetric or flotation concentrators, and pumps. In the small-scale sector, the best prospects include small jack-leg drills, front-loaders, crushers, concentration tables, flotation concentrators, hand tools, and explosives.

New developments, particularly in Potosí, could lead to significant new imports of mining equipment. With the 2004 recovery of mineral prices (especially tin, gold, and silver), mining projects that had been put on hold may now move forward.

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The U.S. Embassy's 2004 Mining Industry Sector Analysis is available at <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/commercial/IndustryMining.pdf>.

Please note that international bidding on the rights to develop Mutun, one of the world's largest iron ore deposits, has been postponed until early 2006.

Textiles: Overview

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Textiles are an important component of Bolivian exports, and the industry could grow significantly if it continues to enjoy preferential tariff treatment under the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA). Under the program, apparel made from regional fabric may enter U.S. markets duty-free, subject to a cap of two percent of total U.S. apparel imports. Alpaca, vicuña, and llama products are exempt from duties.

Estimates suggest ATPDEA lowers the prices of Bolivian textile products in U.S. markets 17 to 20 percent. The act is set to expire December 31, 2006, and prospects for extending its benefits are uncertain.

Best Products/Services

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High-quality raw materials, including cotton, alpaca, angora, and llama, coupled with low labor costs have made Bolivian textile products competitive in international markets. As the sector develops, there may be sales prospects for laundry, stamping, transfer, and packaging machinery; synthetic fibers and threads; decorative accessories; laboratory and packaging supplies; and equipment and design software.

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The U.S. Embassy's 2004 Textile and Apparel Industry Sector Analysis is available at <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/commercial/IndustryTextilesApp.pdf>.

Forestry and Wood Products: Overview

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Forests cover almost half of Bolivia's surface area. Thirty-two of the country's 53 million hectares of forest are set aside for permanent forest production, with approximately eight million hectares managed under concessions. Bolivia leads the world in sustainable natural forest management, with more than two million hectares of certified natural tropical forest.

Bolivia has more than 200 varieties of wood, 172 of which are considered fine or exotic, including moradillo, rosewood, and jacaranda. Mahogany represents 77 percent of total wood production, followed by oak at eight percent. With assistance from the U.S.

Agency for International Development (USAID), the Bolivian Government is considering harvesting and exporting additional woods.

Best Products/Services

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Wood exports consist primarily of furniture and value-added parts and pieces made of wood, rather than sawn timber. Bolivian producers have a great deal of experience in finished products made of mahogany, and the industry has recently introduced new technologies into sawing and drying processes. The best sales prospects involve related equipment, machinery, and processing techniques.

Opportunities

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The U.S. Embassy's 2003 Wood Extraction and Production Industry Sector Analysis is available at <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/commercial/IndustryWood.pdf>.

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Import Tariffs

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Bolivia has a three-tier tariff structure. Capital goods designated for industrial development may enter duty-free; non-essential capital goods are subject to five percent tariffs; and most other goods are subject to 10 percent tariffs. Tariff rates may be found at www.sidunea.aduana.gov.bo.

Luxury items such as tobacco and tobacco products are subject to a specific consumption tax (ICE) and to an additional import tax of 50 percent ad valorem.

Samples and advertising materials are generally subject to regular duty rates, except when specifically prepared as samples, e.g., shoes cut in half, small patches of fabric, and pharmaceutical products and liquors in small bottles clearly marked “free sample.”

Books and publications, gold (except jewelry), personal effects (under USD 300), goods belonging to the diplomatic and consular corps, and imports under government contracts or regional agreements providing for duty exemptions may enter duty-free.

Supreme Decree 26110 (dated March 23, 2001) also allows turnkey imports of equipment and machinery from countries outside the Andean region to enter duty-free.

Trade Barriers

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Supreme Decree 27340 (dated January 31, 2004) banned the importation of certain types of used clothing, including old, destroyed, or useless articles of apparel; used bedding and intimate apparel; old shoes; and certain destroyed or useless textile articles (rags, cords, string, and rope).

Import Requirements and Documentation

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Imports must have the following documentation:

- document description form (Form 135)
- invoice (unless a commercial sample under USD 25 in value)
- bill of lading (when applicable)

- proof of insurance
- certificate of pre-shipment inspection (when applicable)
- port expenditures (when applicable)
- transportation invoice
- packing list
- certificate of origin (when applicable)
- other certificates (as needed)

Goods imported from the Andean Community (Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, and Ecuador) must have certificates of origin to qualify for tariff preferences.

Insecticides

Insecticide imports must have sanitary certificates issued by the National Institute of Occupational Health and sale permit certificates from the Vice Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (VMAG) and the National Service for Food Safety and Security (SENASAG) Pest and Fertilizer Division.

Tobacco and Tobacco Products

Imports of tobacco and tobacco products must have import licenses issued by SENASAG and the Ministry of Health.

Livestock

Live animal imports must have certificates of origin indicating their state of health. Purebred livestock imported for breeding purposes must also have pedigree certificates.

Seeds, Both Treated and Non-Treated, and Plants

All products of vegetable origin must have SENASAG certificates in addition to phytosanitary certificates issued by agricultural authorities in the country of origin and certified by a Bolivian consulate.

Importers must inform Bolivian customs authorities of the arrival of seeds at least one week in advance and arrange for storage in an adequate warehouse prior to inspection. All seeds must comply with the quality and phytosanitary requirements of SENASAG and the National Seed Program before they are sold.

Pharmaceuticals

All pharmaceutical products, including generic, brand name, and over-the-counter, must have sanitary registrations, as established by the Pharmaceutical Law (Law 1737) and related regulations. Products must be registered with the Ministry of Health and Sports and approved by the ministry's National Pharmacology Directorate (UNIMED). The latter grants sale permit certificates to products approved by the U.S Food and Drug Administration.

UNIMED requires a detailed description (monograph copy) for each new product, except for essential pharmaceutical products. The monograph must include the quantitative formula (specifying active ingredients), the pharmaceutical formula, the recommended

dosage, expected product benefits, and possible side effects. Three samples of the product must also be provided to the National Laboratory (INLASA) so that content can be verified. UNIMED requires that products comply with World Health Organization and Pan-American Health Organization guidelines.

UNIMED takes an average of six to 12 months to review new products and one month to review essential products. Its full address follows:

Ministerio de Salud y Deportes
Dirección Nacional de Medicamentos
Capitán Ravelo No. 2199
La Paz, Bolivia
Phone/Fax: (591-2) 244-0122
www.sns.gov.bo

If pharmaceutical products contain drugs covered by the Vienna Convention, special import permits must be obtained from the Ministry of Health.

To import, manufacture, or distribute pharmaceuticals, companies must register with the Ministry of Health and Sports, a process that generally requires ten days to one month. Imported products can be sold through established agents or distributors or through subsidiaries, although given their direct access to UNIMED, it is often easier to market products through agents or representatives. If the latter register pharmaceutical imports, they must have exclusive rights to import and be qualified to act as legal representatives.

Pharmaceutical brand names must also be registered with the National Intellectual Property Service (SENAPI) at the following address:

Servicio Nacional de Propiedad Intelectual
Avenida Camacho esq. Bueno, No. 1488
La Paz, Bolivia
Phone/Fax: (591-2) 237-2047
E-mail: senapi@ceibo.entelnet.bo
www.senapi.gov.bo

U.S. firms should note that Bolivia does not have a law prohibiting copycat registration of pharmaceutical products. Firms may experience difficulties protecting their intellectual property rights and cannot expect chemical information to remain confidential.

Fishery Products

Imports of perishable items, such as seafood products, must have sanitary health certificates and comply with product specification, labeling, and marking standards. The relevant Bolivian authority is:

Ministerio de Asuntos Campesinos y Agropecuarios
Dirección General de Agropecuaria y Seguridad Alimentaria
Rosendo Gutiérrez No. 1061
La Paz, Bolivia
Phone: (591-2) 242-2251 or (591-2) 241-3659

Sanitary regulations are available from the following SENASAG offices:

La Paz
Phone/Fax: (591-2) 222-5698

Trinidad
Phone: (591-3) 462-8107
Fax: (591-3) 465-2177
E-mail: senasagdir@hotmail.com

Food Products

Food imports must have sanitary certificates issued by appropriate authorities in the exporting country, e.g., from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Foodstuffs may be subject to analysis by an official entity in Bolivia, and most food and beverage labels must be registered in Bolivia. Exporters are encouraged to check with importers regarding relevant policies prior to shipment.

For specific information regarding existing foreign agricultural standards and testing, packaging, and certification systems, please contact:

Technical Office for International Trade
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Building 1072, Barc-East
Beltsville, MD 20705
Phone: (301) 344-2651
www.usda.gov

For more information on export procedures relating to animals and plants and their by-products, please contact:

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
U.S. Department of Agriculture
6505 Beltcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD 20782
Phone: (301) 734-8073 (Emergency Services)
Phone: (301) 734-8097 (Veterinary Services)
Phone: (301) 734-8447 (Plant Inspection)
www.aphis.usda.gov

Air Cargo

Air cargo shipments require airway bills instead of bills of lading. Exporters should follow IATA or ICAO rules governing labeling and packaging of dangerous and restricted goods and check with air carriers for further information and appropriate forms.

Parcel Post

Authorized customs brokers must intervene for parcel post shipments valued at over USD 100. Individuals may receive parcel post shipments valued up to USD 100 without the intervention of a customs broker by filling out a customs form at the post office.

U.S. Export Controls

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Exports of defense equipment, materials, and technologies must comply with the provisions of the U.S. Arms Export Control Act.

Temporary Entry

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Established companies can be incorporated into the Temporary Importation for Exports Regime (RITEEX), which allows the duty-free importation of raw materials and intermediate goods for use in manufacturing products for export.

Companies wishing to participate must have the following:

- National Commerce Registration Service (SENAREC) number
- RUC or NIT (taxpayer identification number)
- RUE (exporter identification number)
- fiscal solvency certificate issued by the General Controller of the Republic
- technical coefficients specifications
- warehouses and/or processing units locations

Labeling and Marking Requirements

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Food product labeling requirements were established in 2003 by Supreme Decree 26510. Products normally retain their original labels, but they must also have complementary labeling showing the importer or distributor's taxpayer identification number (RUC), sanitary registration number, and ingredient translations.

Prohibited and Restricted Imports

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Firms wishing to import firearms, munitions, explosives, chemical precursors (which may be used for cocaine production), and other chemical products must register with the Ministry of Defense and obtain import licenses and appropriate ministerial resolutions.

Prohibited imports include:

- Firearms and other weapons (unless approved by the Ministry of Defense)
- Pharmaceuticals and drugs (unless registered in Bolivia)
- Spoiled beverages and food products, or products that contain noxious substances
- Selected liquors, such as pisco and similar products
- Diseased animals
- Plants, fruits, seeds, and vegetables that contain parasites and/or germs and plants declared harmful by the Vice Ministry of Agriculture
- Foreign lottery bills
- Roulette machines and gambling devices
- Advertisements imitating money or bank certificates, postage stamps, and other government-valued papers
- Pornographic books, booklets, paintings, engravings, figures, and other obscene objects
- Merchandise with a registered trademark identical to one used in Bolivia

- Used clothing without a sanitary certificate from the country of origin (except in personal baggage)
- Used hats, shoes, and lingerie (except in personal baggage)
- Vicuña skins, hair, and products
- Certain chemical products (unless with proper import permits)

Customs Regulations and Contact Information

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Bolivian import charges, including domestic taxes (most of which are creditable) and fees, range from 30 to 45 percent, making effective costs considerably higher than the stated zero to 10 percent tariffs.

Landed costs generally include the following:

- cost, insurance, and freight (CIF): the value at the border
- import tariffs: a 10 percent flat rate is applied to CIF unless the product is classified as a capital good, in which case the rate is zero or five percent.
- warehouse fees: customs warehouses are privately owned. Rates vary depending on volume.
- Internal Revenue Service fees: the value-added tax (IVA) is 13.3 percent. Added customs fees bring the effective rate to 14.94 percent, which is charged on an accumulated base.
- Specific Consumption Tax (ICE): the ICE is levied on luxury goods such as automobiles, perfumes, cosmetics, liquors, cigarettes, and beer. Tax rates may be obtained at www.sidunea.aduana.gov.bo.
- customs broker fees: the following customs broker fees are applied to CIF for land shipments and to CIF airport value for air cargo:

From USD:

1	to	10,000	2.00 percent
10,001	to	20,000	1.50 percent
20,001	to	30,000	1.25 percent
30,001	to	50,000	1.00 percent
50,001	to	100,000	0.75 percent
100,001	and above		0.50 percent

Customs brokers also charge fees of 17.65 percent of the total bill to cover their own IVA tax liability.

- trade and industry association fees: groups such as Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Construction charge fees of between 0.03 and 0.04 percent of CIF.

The VAT paid by the importer reduces the importer's tax liability when goods are resold and ultimately reduces actual costs.

Entry and Warehousing

Bolivia benefits from free transit arrangements covering ports in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. The Chilean port of Arica is generally considered the best port of entry. Others include Antofagasta and Iquique (Chile); Matarani and Ilo (Peru); Santos (Brazil); and Rosario (Argentina). Bolivian customs officials maintain warehousing facilities in each port and allow storage of incoming goods for up to 90 days, with fees levied at 0.5 percent of CIF for each 30-day period or fraction thereof. Once clearing documents are signed, goods must be removed from storage within eight days to avoid an additional charge of two percent of CIF.

Imported, stored merchandise may be considered abandoned either by an explicit request or by failure to claim it within the required 90 days. By law, such goods are subject to public auction; proceeds (after expenses) go to the interested party.

If importers wish to remove their merchandise after the 90-day period but before the auction takes place, they must pay a five percent charge over the customs tariff plus two percent of CIF. Due to the expense and time involved in reshipment, U.S. exporters usually prefer to sell these goods in Bolivia.

For additional information, interested parties may contact the following:

Aduana Nacional
Calle Av. 20 de Octubre No. 2038
Phone: (591-2) 2152901 or 215-2904
Fax: (591-2) 215-2904
www.aduana.gov.bo/

Standards

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The Bolivian Government imposes no specific import standards, although in the future, products for use in the oil and gas industry may have to comply with certain specific requirements. The National Certification and Standardization Organization (IBNORCA) is charged with developing Bolivian product standards.

To become legal exporters, firms must register with the Sistema de Ventanilla Unica de Exportación (SIVEX), part of the Vice Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Exports. Once registered, exporters can request that taxes and tariffs related to the production of exported merchandise be refunded.

Exporters must present commercial invoices, packing lists, and sanitary certificates (issued by the Vice Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock for animal and vegetable products) and obtain an exporter's bond from the Bolivian customs service.

NIST Notify U.S. Service

Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed

foreign technical regulations that can affect access to international markets. Interested parties may register online at: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

Trade Agreements

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Bolivia became an associate member of MERCOSUR (Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Chile) under a free trade agreement that became effective March 1, 1997. More than 30 percent of all products traded between Bolivia and the four MERCOSUR countries were granted immediate duty-free access to neighboring markets, and most of the remainder will enjoy zero tariffs by 2007. Certain sensitive products will be protected for up to 18 years.

Bolivia, with Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru, is also a member of the Andean Community, which has significantly reduced most internal trade barriers.

Bolivia has signed bilateral agreements with some South American countries to eliminate or reduce tariffs on explicit lists of products and became party to a free trade agreement with Mexico in September 1994.

The European Union, Japan, and the United States allow most Bolivian exports to enter their markets at either duty-free or reduced duty rates. More than 6,000 products benefit from duty-free access to U.S. markets under the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA), and many more benefit from preferential treatment under the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).

Bolivia has been an observer to Andean Free Trade Agreement negotiations since May 2004 and has participated fully in trade capacity building talks.

Bolivia's accession to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was ratified in September 1990, with ratification of Bolivia's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) following in 1995.

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Chapter 6: Investment Climate

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Openness to Foreign Investment

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Bolivia generally welcomes foreign investment. Foreign firms are not subject to special registration requirements and are neither screened nor officially treated in a discriminatory fashion. That said, they may be adversely affected by inconsistent and arbitrary regulatory decisions, unfavorable interpretations of laws, and an easily corrupted and influenced judicial system that may deny due process.

The Investment Law (Law 1182, 1990) provides for national treatment of foreign firms and guarantees the unimpeded repatriation of profits, the free convertibility of currency, and the right to international arbitration in all sectors.

Laws governing activities in the mining (Law 1777, 1997) and hydrocarbons (Law 1689, 1996) sectors authorize joint ventures with state-owned corporations and allow foreign firms paying taxes in Bolivia to obtain tax credits in their home countries.

Most mines currently owned by the state-run Bolivian Mining Corporation (COMIBOL) cannot be purchased outright, but private operators can enter into joint venture or leasing contracts with COMIBOL.

Article 139 of the Bolivian Constitution stipulates that all hydrocarbons deposits, whatever their state or form, belong to the Government of Bolivia. No concessions or contracts may transfer ownership of hydrocarbons deposits to private or other interests. The Bolivian Government exercises its right to explore and exploit hydrocarbons reserves and trade related products through the state-owned firm Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales Bolivianos (YPFB), which may enter into joint venture contracts for limited periods of time with national or foreign individuals or companies.

Investors should note that the May 2005 Hydrocarbons Law (Law 3058) required companies to migrate to new contracts within 180 days, imposed an additional 32 percent tax on revenues, and required producers to relinquish all hydrocarbons to the state, losing ownership of production at the wellhead and greatly reducing the value of company assets. As of October 2005, seven hydrocarbons companies, including three U.S. firms, had threatened to pursue international arbitration under their countries' bilateral investment treaties with Bolivia.

Conversion and Transfer Policies

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Currency is freely convertible at Bolivian banks and exchange houses. The official exchange rate is determined by the Central Bank's daily auction of dollars, where the bank offers a given amount of dollars and sets an undisclosed minimum floor price. The parallel rate has tracked the official rate closely, which suggests the market finds the Central Bank's policy acceptable.

The Banking Law (Law 1488, 1993) establishes regulations for foreign currency hedging and authorizes banks to maintain accounts in foreign currencies, clearly accommodating popular activity, as a large percentage of deposits are denominated in U.S. dollars or held in dollar-linked accounts. There are no restrictions of any kind on currency transfers or remittances.

Expropriation and Compensation

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Article 22 of the Bolivian Constitution allows the government to expropriate property for the public good or when the property does not fulfill a "social purpose." It also stipulates that individuals and firms be awarded just compensation. The Mining and Hydrocarbons Laws outline procedures for expropriating land to develop underlying concessions.

Dispute Settlement

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Property and contractual rights may be enforced in Bolivian courts, but the legal process is time consuming and may be subject to political influence and corruption.

Efforts to improve Bolivia's justice system have produced results in some regional courts. Past decisions by the Supreme Court and Constitutional Tribunal have occasionally been influenced by outside factors, but the former has generally rendered fair decisions. However, neither Bolivian nor foreign firms can rely on the judicial system to effectively enforce contracts.

The Bolivian Government accepts binding international arbitration in all sectors. The Investment Law provides for arbitration in accordance with the Bolivian Constitution and international norms, and the Arbitration and Conciliation Law (Law 1770, 1997) outlines arbitration procedures and enforcement mechanisms. The law states that international agreements, such as the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States and the New York Convention of 1958 on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards, must be honored. It mandates the recognition of foreign decisions and awards and establishes procedures for the Supreme Court's execution of decisions.

Bolivia's Commercial Code (Decree Law 14379, 1977) has roots dating from 1939. Although many of its provisions have been modified and supplanted by more specific legislation, it continues to provide general guidance for commercial activities.

Performance Requirements and Incentives

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The Bolivian Government does not impose performance requirements as conditions for establishing, maintaining, or expanding businesses. It does not generally provide tax or investment incentives for foreign investors, but some municipalities have established property tax exemptions for businesses located in their areas.

Foreign firms are allowed to participate in government-sponsored research and development programs, but few, if any, such programs exist.

Work permit, visa, and residence requirements are non-discriminatory. The government sets a minimum monthly wage each year, but many workers in the formal private sector earn more.

Right to Private Ownership and Establishment

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Foreign and domestic private entities have equal right to establish, acquire, and dispose of business interests and to engage in remunerative activity. Private and public entities enjoy equal access to markets, credit, licenses, and supplies.

Protection of Property Rights

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Bolivian law guarantees property rights, but rights are not always effectively enforced. The Agrarian Law (Law 1715, 1996) outlines the rights and obligations of land ownership and establishes an independent Agrarian Superintendent to administer the law's provisions, and the Office of Property Registry oversees the acquisition and disposition of land, real estate, and mortgages.

Despite efforts to reform the National Service of Agrarian Reform (INRA) and related entities, challenges to land titles are common, and an adequate system of title verification is lacking. Competing claims to land titles and the absence of a reliable dispute resolution process create risk and uncertainty in real property acquisition. Illegal squatting on rural private property is an ongoing problem.

Existing legislation governing intellectual property rights (IPR) protection is insufficient, and enforcement efforts have been sporadic and largely ineffective. The Copyright Law (Law 1322, 1992) and the Bolivian Criminal Procedures Code recognize copyright infringement as a public offense and provide for the criminal prosecution of IPR violations, respectively, but piracy rates for software and sound and video recordings remain among the highest in Latin America.

The Copyright Law protects literary, artistic, and scientific works for the lifetime of the author plus 50 years. It protects the rights of Bolivian authors, foreign authors domiciled in Bolivia, and foreign authors published for the first time in Bolivia. Foreigners not domiciled in Bolivia enjoy protection to the extent provided in international conventions

and treaties to which Bolivia is a party. Bolivian copyright protection includes the exclusive right to copy or reproduce works; to revise, adapt, or prepare derivative works; to distribute copies of works; and to publicly communicate works.

Although the exclusive right to translate works is not explicitly granted, the law does prevent unauthorized adaptation, transformation, modification, and editing. The law also provides protection for software and databases.

The Bolivian Film and Video Law (Law 1302, 1991) also contains elements of IPR protection, establishing a National Movie Council (CONACINE) to oversee the domestic film industry and requiring that all films and videos shown or distributed in Bolivia be registered with the organization.

Patent registrations are reviewed for form and substance. A notice of the proposed patent registration is published in the Official Gazette, and if no objections are raised within 30 working days, a patent is granted for a period of 20 years.

The registration of trademarks parallels that of patents. Once obtained, a trademark is valid for a 10-year renewable period but can be cancelled if not used within three years.

Bolivia has no laws protecting trade secrets.

In 1999, the Bolivian Government established the National Intellectual Property Rights Service (SENAPI), uniting in a single body the several organizations previously charged with IPR protection. This has brought some coherency to government efforts to protect and enforce intellectual property rights, but the organization's reach is limited.

Bolivia belongs to the World Intellectual Property Organization and is a signatory to the Nice Agreement and the Paris, Bern, and Geneva Conventions.

Transparency of the Regulatory System

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The Bolivian regulatory system is generally transparent and consistent with international norms. Bolivia has no laws directly regulating competition. Instead, related articles are incorporated into laws governing activity in specific sectors.

The Sectoral Regulatory System (SIRESE) Law (Law 1600, 1994) establishes general principles governing anti-competitive practices, expressly prohibiting companies engaging in regulated activities from participating in agreements, contracts, decisions, or practices whose purpose or effect is to hinder, restrict, or distort competition.

The law created an autonomous regulatory body comprised of a general superintendent and five specific superintendents to oversee the water, electricity, telecommunications, transportation, and hydrocarbons sectors. Market forces largely determine public utility prices, but most are periodically reviewed and approved by the relevant superintendent, with regulated prices occasionally established through relatively transparent procedures and formulas. An exception is potable water and garbage collection, where municipalities set local rates.

The Electricity Law (Law 1604, 1994), the Telecommunications Law (Law 1632, 1995), and the Hydrocarbons Law (Law 1689, 1996) define the characteristics and functions of their respective superintendents.

A similar regulatory system governs the financial sector, but several laws have changed its structure over the last five years.

In April 2002, the Bolivian Congress approved a new Administrative Procedures Law (Law 2341, 2002) to enhance public participation in the rulemaking process and strengthen the administration of public agencies.

Efficient Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment

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Bolivian commercial banks were once closely held operations lending only to well known individuals or firms, but foreign institutions and shareholders now play a role in the banking system. Bolivian bankers have developed in-house capabilities to adjudicate credit risk and to evaluate expected rates of return in line with international norms.

Credit is allocated on market terms, but foreign investors may find it difficult to qualify for loans from local banks due to an early requirement that domestic loans be issued exclusively against domestic collateral. Since commercial credit is generally extended on a short-term basis at high interest rates, most foreign investors prefer to obtain credit abroad.

Established Bolivian firms may issue short- or medium-term debt in local capital markets, which act primarily as secondary markets for Central Bank certificates of deposit. Bolivian capital markets are seeking to expand their handling of local corporate bond issues, and a new Securities Law (Law 1834, 1998) lays the groundwork for creating a truly modern exchange. Over the last few years, several Bolivian companies and some foreign firms have been able to raise funding through local capital markets.

The Securities Law also established a securities commission that recently approved the creation of several Bolivian mutual funds. Unfortunately, few local companies issue stock, which limits choices for the funds.

Although most accounting regulations follow international principles, Bolivian accounting and reporting procedures do not fully conform to world standards. Bolivian firms commonly maintain several sets of books: one for tax authorities, one for bankers, and another for management.

Financial sector regulations restrict financial transactions for managers and senior executives, and many Bolivians urge the adoption of a corporate governance law. The securities regulator is also in the process of drafting regulations to prevent hostile takeovers and protect minority shareholders.

Political Violence

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Bolivia is prone to social unrest that can quickly turn violent and disrupt the transportation of goods and people on principal highways. In March and April 2000, protests against foreign investment in the Cochabamba municipal water system eventually erupted in roadblocks and demonstrations across the country.

Roadblocks were even more serious in September and October 2000, when rural indigenous groups, coca growers, and a variety of labor and social movements united in opposition to various government policies. Concessions by the Bolivian Government ended these and subsequent protests, but not before the roadblocks caused serious economic hardship and disrupted Bolivian exports.

Disruptive and violent social protests occur regularly in La Paz and El Alto. In a serious threat to democracy, units of the National Police mutinied against the Sanchez de Lozada administration in February 2003. Spurred by a misunderstood government proposal to introduce income taxes, mutinous police units fought loyal military units, and, with the police absent, rioters looted and burned government buildings and private businesses. Although order was restored within 36 hours with minimal damage to U.S. firms, the death toll in La Paz was over 30.

Violence was even worse during the October 2003 "gas war," a social and political dispute that resulted in the deaths of over 60 people and ended with the resignation of President Sanchez de Lozada. His successor, Carlos Mesa, resigned after similarly violent protests in El Alto in June 2005.

Corruption

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Corruption in the public sector and in many non-governmental institutions is endemic. Officials accused of corruption are rarely prosecuted or convicted.

The Bolivian Government recently introduced a series of reforms to modernize its operations, improve existing legislation, and increase citizen participation in politics, adopting the Financial Administration and Control (SAFCO) Law, the State Employees Statute Act, and the Sworn Declaration of Property and Income Law and creating a Judiciary Council, a Human Rights Ombudsman, a Constitutional Court, and a Civil Service Superintendent. A cabinet-level presidential delegate is empowered to investigate corruption at any level in any branch of government.

Bolivia's National Integrity Plan outlines plans for judicial reform and state modernization. Under its Project of Institutional Reform (PRI), the Customs Service, the National Revenue Service, the National Road Service, and the Ministries of Housing, Education, and Agriculture have been reformed and professionalized.

With international assistance, the last several governments have also worked to overhaul the Customs Service. The Customs Reform Law was enacted in August 1999 and implemented over a 36-month period. Corruption has reportedly fallen, but contraband continues to flow into Bolivia. The minister of finance heads a multi-agency council on contraband issues.

Bilateral Investment Agreements

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Bolivia has signed bilateral investment treaties (BITs) with Argentina, Belgium/Luxembourg, China, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The U.S.-Bolivia BIT entered into force in June 2001. Investors are entitled to the better of national treatment or most favored nation (MFN) treatment when they initiate an investment and while they maintain that investment, subject to certain limited and specifically described exceptions listed in annexes and protocols.

Expropriation can occur only in accordance with international law, that is, for a public purpose, in a nondiscriminatory manner, under due process of law, and accompanied by prompt, adequate, and effective compensation.

Investors have the right to transfer funds into and out of the host country without delay using a market rate of exchange. This covers all investment-related transfers, including interest, liquidation proceeds, repatriated profits, and infusions of additional financial resources after the initial investment.

The ability of either government to require investors to adopt inefficient and trade-distorting practices is limited, and performance requirements such as local content and export quotas are prohibited.

Investors have the right to submit an investment dispute with the treaty partner's government to international arbitration, with no obligation to use the host country's domestic courts.

Investors also have the right to employ the top managerial personnel of their choice, regardless of nationality.

OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs

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The 1985 U.S.-Bolivia Investment Insurance Agreement provides for a full range of Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) programs, including political risk insurance and loan financing. OPIC provides financing assistance to U.S. firms through direct loans and through guarantees issued by U.S. financial institutions.

The U.S. Export-Import Bank (EXIM) also operates in Bolivia, offering short- and medium-term public sector transactions.

The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development's (IBRD) Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) has offered a complete line of investment guarantees to foreign investors in Bolivia since October 1991.

Labor

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Approximately two-thirds of Bolivia's population of 8.3 million is considered "economically active," a figure that includes teenagers and children legally prohibited

from working. Overall, between 60 and 65 percent of laborers participate in the informal economy, where no contractual employer-employee relationships exist.

Foreign investors generally find the labor force stable, with low turnover rates and high levels of manual dexterity. Relatively low education and literacy levels tend to limit labor productivity, a fact reflected in the low cost of labor. Unskilled labor is readily available, but skilled workers may be harder to find.

Bolivian labor law guarantees workers the right of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively. Most companies are unionized, and nearly all unions belong to the Confederation of Bolivian Workers (COB). Despite international perceptions, extensive labor unrest in the private sector is uncommon, and most foreign firms enjoy positive labor-management relations.

Bolivian labor law also restricts child labor and provides for worker safety. Effective enforcement, however, is often lacking.

Free Trade Zones

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The Bolivian Government created free trade zones (FTZs) under Supreme Decrees 22410 and 22526. Operations must be authorized by the National Council on Free Trade Zones (CONZOF), which oversees all industrial and commercial FTZs. Free trade zones exist in the cities of El Alto, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Oruro, Puerto Aguirre (on the Brazilian border), and Desaguadero (on the Peruvian border).

A proposed FTZ in Guayaramerin in the Department of Beni is not yet fully operational. The FTZ in Cobija, meanwhile, has proven unattractive to investors due to a lack of roads and other basic infrastructure.

Foreign Direct Investment Statistics

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U.S. investments accounted for an average of 35 percent of net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows of USD 5.6 billion between 1996 and 2003, followed by Argentina (10 percent), Brazil (9.6 percent), Italy (9.5 percent), Spain (8.9 percent), France (3.7 percent), and the United Kingdom (3.6 percent).

In late 2004, U.S. investment stock was valued at approximately USD 2.27 billion, 33 percent of total FDI stock of USD 6.88 billion. U.S. firms have invested an estimated USD 660 million in hydrocarbons, USD 265 million in mining, USD 220 million in energy production and distribution, and USD 145 million in telecommunications.

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How the Banking System Operates

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The Central Bank and 13 privately owned banks comprise Bolivia's banking system, with commercial banks representing approximately fourth-fifths of the whole. The remaining one-fifth is comprised of savings and loans, credit unions, and other financial institutions. As of December 2005, deposits totaled an estimated USD 3.7 billion, of which almost 90 percent were in U.S. dollar-denominated deposits.

The 1993 Banking Law significantly modernized the Bolivian banking system, establishing rules governing factoring and leasing and setting parameters for bank holding companies. The 1995 Central Bank Law later redefined the Central Bank's control over the banking sector, setting higher reserve requirements and eliminating the insider lending that led to the collapse of many Bolivian banks.

The Bolivian Government recently enacted additional changes to the financial regulatory framework. The 1998 Law of Property and Popular Credit modified the regulatory system governing the non-banking financial system, creating a Prudential Norms Financial Committee (CONFIP) to issue regulations without interfering in currency exchange and monetary policies, which remain the purview of the Central Bank. The law also created the Superintendent of Appeals to reconsider decisions made by the Superintendent of Pensions, Insurance, and Securities and the Superintendent of Banks and Financial Institutions, Bolivia's principal financial regulatory agencies. Finally, the law authorized the creation of private financial funds, savings and loans cooperatives, and non-governmental organizations to improve access to credit and other financial services.

Foreign Exchange Controls

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Bolivia places no controls on foreign exchange transactions, beyond those intended to curb money laundering. Local currency is freely convertible for all transactions. As of December 2005, the exchange rate was approximately Bs 8 per USD 1.

Traveler's checks, dollars, and major currencies can be exchanged in banks, exchange houses, and major hotels. Most automated teller machines (ATMs) in major cities offer cash withdrawals in either bolivianos or U.S. dollars.

U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks

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No U.S. banks operate in Bolivia.

All commercial banks provide regular banking services, accepting deposits for both checking and savings accounts and offering short- and medium-term loans. Local banks are authorized to hold U.S. dollar-denominated time deposits.

The following banks have correspondent banking arrangements with U.S. banks:

Banco de Crédito de Bolivia S.A.
Banco Do Brasil S. A.
Banco Económico S. A.
Banco Ganadero S.A.
Banco Industrial S.A. (BISA)
Banco Mercantil S.A.
Banco Nacional de Bolivia
Banco Santa Cruz S.A.
Banco Solidario S. A.

For additional information, interested parties should contact the National Association of Banks (ASOBAN) at the following address:

Asociación de Bancos Privados de Bolivia (ASOBAN)
Edificio Cámara Nacional de Comercio, Piso 15
La Paz, Bolivia
Phone: (591-2) 236-1308
Fax: (591-2) 239-1093
E-mail: info@asoban.bo
www.asoban.bo

Project Financing

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Credit is generally difficult to obtain without using unencumbered local assets as collateral. Collateral requirements for all but the most valued clients are very high. Interest rates are influenced by the Central Bank's certificate of deposit rates, as well as by high administrative costs resulting from general operational inefficiency (as measured by overhead costs) among local banks. Although there are no formal restrictions on foreign companies borrowing locally, few large investors do so because of the financial system's small size.

International and bilateral financial institutions may provide credit lines for Bolivian exporters at below-market interest rates. The lines are issued by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank, and the Andean Development Corporation (CAF) and are generally channeled through the Bolivian Central Bank for on-lending through local private banks. The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the U.S. Export-Import Bank (EXIM) also offer insurance and/or financing products to the private sector when U.S. exports are part of a project.

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Export-Import Bank of the United States: <http://www.exim.gov>

EXIM Country Limitation Schedule: http://www.exim.gov/tools/country/country_limits.html

OPIC: <http://www.opic.gov>

U.S. Trade and Development Agency: <http://www.tda.gov/>

SBA's Office of International Trade: <http://www.sba.gov/oit/>

USDA Commodity Credit Corporation: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/cc/default.htm>

U.S. Agency for International Development: <http://www.usaid.gov>

Inter-American Development Bank: <http://www.iadb.org/>

World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org/>

Andean Development Corporation: <http://www.caf.com/>

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Business Customs

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Many members of Bolivia's private sector have ample direct exposure to U.S. and European business customs and practices.

The importance of occasional personal visits from U.S. executives, as well as prompt, responsive handling of communications, cannot be overstated, given the crucial role of local agents and representatives. After establishing a relationship, local representatives generally expect to visit the parent company's facilities and head offices to become better acquainted with the company's personnel and operating techniques.

Although capitalization and privatization have placed most former state-owned enterprises in private hands, Bolivia's economy remains influenced by public sector decisions. Foreign firms should be prepared to deal with government officials and occasionally convoluted procedures.

Regrettably, business practices in both the public and private sectors can involve standards unlike those in the United States, some of which may be illegal or unethical under U.S. law. U.S. companies should exercise care and discretion in their business dealings and consult with the U.S. Embassy for advice on how to proceed if confronted with corrupt practices.

Travel Advisory

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To access the U.S. Department of State's Consular Information Sheet, please go to http://travel.state.gov/travel/warnings_consular.html.

Visa Requirements

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Foreigners wishing to work in Bolivia must obtain appropriate permits from the Ministry of Labor. Foreigners must file an application with the ministry and present a passport and valid visa; the process generally takes three to four weeks.

Bolivia has three non-immigrant visa categories:

Tourist Visas

U.S. citizens traveling to Bolivia for fewer than 30 days do not need tourist visas. Extensions valid for an additional 60 days may be obtained from the National Immigration Service at no cost. Travelers wishing to remain longer than 90 days must obtain a second 30-day extension from the National Immigration Service; the cost is approximately USD 25.

Specific Objective Visas

Specific objective visas allow travelers to remain in Bolivia for 30 days, which may be extended for an additional 60 days. The price of the first 30-day extension is USD 102, and the price of the second is USD 65. Applicants for this type of visa must include documentation supporting the purpose of travel.

Temporary Residence Visas

Temporary residence visas are valid for up to two years and may be extended to immediate family. Visas may be obtained through the National Immigration Service. The process costs approximately USD 190 and generally requires 10 work days. Applicants must present the following documents:

- a passport valid for at least six months with a valid specific objective visa (for any purpose other than tourism);
- a legal petition addressed to the Director General of Immigration requesting temporary residence;
- a work contract certified by the Ministry of Labor specifying the duration of the contract;
- a certificate from the entity for which the applicant expects to work (or for students, a certificate of studies);
- a security clearance issued by the Bolivian National Police;
- a legal address registered with the National Police;
- a temporary residence request form; and
- a change of visa request form (even for first-time visa requests).

Bolivia also offers permanent residence permits. To obtain them, applicants must have had two-year temporary residence visas. Applicants must pay a USD 380 fee and present the following documents:

- a passport valid for at least six months with a two-year temporary residence visa;
- a legal petition addressed to the Director General of Immigration requesting indefinite residence;
- a medical certificate issued by the National Institute of Employment Health;
- a security clearance issued by the Bolivian National Police;
- a legal address registered with the National Police;
- a birth certificate certified by a Bolivian consulate;
- a police security clearance issued in the country of origin and certified by a Bolivian consulate;
- an indefinite visa request form;
- a change of visa request form; and
- a work contract certified by the Ministry of Labor.

The Bolivian Government reserves the right to accept or deny requests for indefinite residence.

Temporary residence visas and permanent residence permits cover principals, managers, and trained and specially qualified employees involved in a foreign firm's operations. No special qualifications are required for entry, and individuals are not limited in the type of work they can perform after receiving visas. The visa holder's spouse and children may enter Bolivia with the visa holder provided their names are included in the legal petition presented to the Director General of Immigration.

For additional information, please contact:

Servicio Nacional de Migración
Ministerio de Gobierno
La Paz, Bolivia
Phone/Fax: (591-2) 211-0960

U.S. companies requiring the travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States should note that security procedures are handled via an interagency process. Foreign visa applicants should use the following links:

State Department Visa Website: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/index.html>

United States Visas.gov: <http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/>

U.S. Embassy consular section:
<http://bolivia.usembassy.gov/consulado/nivspanish.htm>

Telecommunications

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Several Bolivian companies offer local, long-distance, and international telephone services. Two of the four market participants have U.S. investors: AXS Communications (previously owned by AES Corporation) and Nuevatel/Viva (owned by Western Wireless).

Cellular phones are increasingly popular, as aggressive competition has led to some of the lowest prices in the hemisphere. The four service providers include Entel (Italia Telecom), Telecel (Millicom), Nuevatel/Viva (Western Wireless), and COTAS (in the Santa Cruz area).

Transportation

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Transportation is hindered by a lack of developed infrastructure. Of Bolivia's 60,000 km of roads, only 4,100 km are paved. Another 18,300 km are gravel, and 37,800 km are dirt. Paved roads connect La Paz to Desaguadero (on the Peruvian border), Arica (in northern Chile), Oruro, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz. A new paved road from Santa Cruz to Trinidad was recently inaugurated. Other roads, including those to Brazil, are often impassable or extremely slow due to regularly occurring rain coupled with poor maintenance.

The Bolivian railroad system has a total of 3,960 km of track, divided into two non-connecting segments. The western segment is 2,500 km long and serves the Pacific ports of Arica and Antofagasta (both in Chile), along with the lake port of Guaqui and major cities in the Altiplano and Andean valleys. Much of the segment is in disrepair. The eastern segment is better maintained and links Santa Cruz to Brazil and Argentina.

Two airlines, American Airlines and Lloyd Aereo Boliviano (LAB), offer service from Miami to La Paz and Santa Cruz. A second domestic carrier, Aerosur, began operations in 2001, with a third, Amazonas, starting soon thereafter. A variety of foreign airlines offer flights to neighboring countries, most on a daily basis.

Taxi fares from the El Alto airport to La Paz are approximately 55 Bs (USD 6.88). Within the city, fares range from USD 0.75 and USD 1.50, depending on the length of the trip. Rental cars are available but may be expensive, as some companies require clients to hire drivers. U.S. driver's licenses need to be validated for 90 days after arrival, a process that takes about 48 hours.

Language

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Bolivia's official language is Spanish.

Health

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The El Alto airport is 13,200 feet above sea level. The altitude poses risks of illness, hospitalization, and even death, regardless of whether travelers have medical conditions that affect blood circulation or breathing. Since even healthy individuals have problems, travelers may wish to consult a doctor before leaving. Recent arrivals should limit physical activity, drink plenty of water, and refrain from consuming alcoholic beverages until they acclimate, which can take anywhere from a few hours to several days.

To help prevent complications caused by the altitude, some travelers take acetazolamide (Diamox) 125 mg twice a day, beginning two days before arrival in La Paz, on the day of the trip, and two to three days after arriving. The medication inhibits the enzyme carbonic anhydrase, has a slight diuretic effect, and stimulates respiration. In the United States, it is available only by prescription. Pregnant women, nursing mothers, and those with severe allergies to sulfa drugs cannot take Diamox.

Sanitary conditions are such that travelers and residents generally consume only bottled water, refuse ice, and wash fresh fruits and vegetables with special disinfectants or bleaches. Even the best restaurants may inadvertently serve tainted food. Americans have been victims of e-coli, typhoid, salmonella, and other diseases. Hepatitis and rabies are fairly common, but with proper vaccinations, both can usually be avoided. Malaria, leishmanioses, and yellow fever are found in the jungles in Bolivia's northern and eastern regions, and white leprosy and yellow fever are sometimes found in the Yungas region of La Paz.

Office hours vary somewhat from city to city. In La Paz and Cochabamba, office hours are generally 09:00 to noon and 14:30 to 18:30, except for government offices, which open at 08:00 and close at 16:00 with no lunch break. In Santa Cruz, office hours are generally 08:00 to 18:30 with a two-hour lunch break.

2006 Holidays

National Holidays

New Year's Day	January 2
Carnival	February 27-28 (varies, usually falls in February or March)
Good Friday	April 14 (varies, usually falls in March or April)
Labor Day	May 1
Corpus Christi	June 15 (varies, usually falls in May or June)
Independence Day	August 6
All Saints Day	November 2
Christmas Day	December 25

Departmental Holidays*

Oruro Day	February 10
Tarija Day	April 15
Sucre Day	May 25
La Paz Day	July 16
Cochabamba Day	September 14
Santa Cruz Day	September 24
Pando Day	October 11
Potosí Day	November 10
Beni Day	November 18

*As per a 2002 decree, all departmental holidays falling on a weekend are observed on either the previous Friday or following Monday.

Personal effects not exceeding USD 300 are exempt from duties.

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Chapter 9: Contacts, Market Research, and Trade Events

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- [Market Research](#)
- [Trade Events](#)

Contacts

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All addresses are in La Paz unless noted. "Casilla" means P.O. Box.

Government Ministries

Ministry of the Presidency

Palacio de Gobierno
Casilla 7832
Phone: (591-2) 215-3869 or 215-3866
Fax: (591-2) 215-3870
<http://www.comunica.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Foreign Relations and Worship

Plaza Murillo esq. Ingavi
Phone: (591-2) 240-8293 or 240-8189
Fax: (591-2) 240-8293 or 240-8915
<http://www.rree.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Government

Av. Arce 2409 esq. Belisario Salinas
Phone: (591-2) 244-0213 or 244-0114
Fax: (591-2) 244-2589
<http://www.mingobierno.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Defense

Plaza Abaroa
Phone: (591-2) 243-4249 or 243-0130
Fax: (591-2) 243-3159
<http://www.mindef.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Finance

Palacio de Comunicaciones, Piso 19
Phone: (591-2) 239-2220 or 239-2779
Fax: (591-2) 235-9955
<http://www.hacienda.gov.bo>

Ministry of Economic Development

Palacio de Comunicaciones, Piso 20
Phone: (591-2) 235-7829 or 212-4931
Fax: (591-2) 212-9213
<http://www.desarrollo.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Education

Av. Arce 2147
Phone: (591-2) 244-1200 or 244-0160
Fax: (591-2) 244-2144
<http://www.minedu.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Health and Sports

Plaza del Estudiante
Phone: (591-2) 237-1379
Fax: (591-2) 249-2900
<http://www.sns.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Labor

Yanachocha esq. Mercado
Phone: (591-2) 214-9502
Fax: (591-2) 241-1086
<http://www.mintrabajo.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Agriculture

Rosendo Gutierrez No. 713
Phone: (591-2) 241-4916
Fax: (591-2) 241-4571
<http://www.maca.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Sustainable Development

Edificio Ex-Comibol
Mariscal Santa Cruz esq. Oruro
Phone: (591-2) 233-0704 or 233-0590
Fax: (591-2) 231-2641
<http://www.mds.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Services and Public Works

Palacio de Comunicaciones, Piso 5
Phone: (591-2) 211-4994 or 231-1010
Fax: (591-2) 212-4379
www.oopp.gov.bo/

Ministry of Hydrocarbons

Palacio de Comunicaciones, Piso 12
Phone: (591-2) 233-7264
Fax: (591-2) 214-1307
<http://www.hidrocarburos.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Popular Participation

Av. 20 de Octubre esq. Fernando Guachilla, Piso 3
Phone: (591-2) 242-1860 or 211-0930
Fax: (591-2) 211-3613
<http://www.municipio.gov.bo/portal2/>

Ministry of Indigenous Affairs

Sanchez Lima esq. Ecuador
Edificio Orion, Planta Baja No. 2072
Oficina 18
Tel: (591-2) 242-4466 or 215-2344
Fax: (591-2) 242-4466
<http://www.maipo.gov.bo/>

Ministry of Mining

Palacio de Comunicaciones, Piso 14
Phone: (591-2) 231-0846
Fax: (591-2) 239-1241

For a complete list of ranking officials, please contact the U.S. Embassy's commercial section.

Other Government Contacts

Bolivian Central Bank

Ayacucho esq. Mercado
Casilla 3118
Phone: (591-2) 240-9090 or 240-6280
Fax: (591-2) 240-6598
<http://www.bcb.gov.bo>

National Customs Service

Calle Av. 20 de Octubre No. 2038
Phone: (591-2) 2152901 or 215-2904
Fax: (591-2) 215-2904
www.aduana.gov.bo/

Trade Associations/Chambers of Commerce

Private Businessmen's Confederation (Confederación de Empresarios Privados de Bolivia)

Calle Mendez Arcos No. 117
Casilla 4239
Phone: (591-2) 242-0999
Fax: (591-2) 242-1272
E-mail: cepbol@ceibo.entelnet.bo

National Chamber of Commerce (Cámara Nacional de Comercio)

Av. Mariscal Santa Cruz No. 1392
Edificio Cámara Nacional de Comercio
Piso 1
Casilla 7
Phone: (591-2) 237-8606
Fax: (591-2) 239-1004
E-mail: cnc@boliviacomercio.org.bo
www.boliviacomercio.org.bo

National Chamber of Industry (Cámara Nacional de Industria)

Av. Mariscal Santa Cruz 1392
Edificio Cámara Nacional de Comercio
Piso 14
Casilla 611
Phone: (591-2) 237-4476
Fax: (591-2) 236-2766
E-mail: cni@entelnet.bo
<http://www.bolivia-industry.com>

National Chamber of Exporters

Avenida Arce 2017 esq. Goitia
Phone: 591 2 244 0943
Fax: 591 2 244 1491
E-mail: caneb@abslmail.entelnet.bo
<http://www.caneb.com>

**American Chamber of Commerce of Bolivia (AMCHAM)
(Cámara Americana de Comercio de Bolivia)**

Av. 6 de Agosto
Edificio Hilda, Piso 2, Oficina 204
Casilla 8268
Phone: (591-2) 244-3939
Fax: (591-2) 244-3972
<http://www.amchambolivia.com>

Bolivian-American Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 6721, FDR Station
New York, NY 10150
Phone: 1 212 233 7776
Fax: 1 212 233 7779
E-mail: info@bolivia-us.org
www.bolivia-us.org

Santa Cruz Chamber of Industry, Commerce, Services, and Tourism (CAINCO) (Cámara de Industria, Comercio, Servicios y Turismo de Santa Cruz)

Avenida Saavedra esq. Las Américas
Casilla 180
Santa Cruz
Phone: (591-3) 333-4555
Fax: (591-3) 334-2353
<http://www.cainco.org.bo>

Bolivian Private Bankers Association (Asociación de Bancos Privados de Bolivia)

Avenida Mariscal Santa Cruz 1392
Edificio Cámara de Comercio
Casilla 5822
Phone: (591-2) 233-4794
Fax: (591-2) 239-1093
E-mail: info@asoban.bo
<http://www.asoban.bo>

Bolivian Chamber of Construction Companies (Cámara Boliviana de la Construcción)

Av. 20 de Octubre No. 1948
Edificio Terranova
Casilla 3215
Phone: (591-2) 242-3139
Fax: (591-2) 211-7530

National Chamber of Small Mining Firms (Cámara Nacional de Minería)

Av. Villazon Pasaje Bernardo Trigo 429
Casilla 2022
Phone: (591-2) 244-1651
Fax: (591-2) 244-1651

National Association of Medium-Sized Mining Firms (Asociación Nacional de Mineros Medianos)

Calle Pedro Salazar No. 600
Casilla 6190
Phone: (591-2) 241-2232
Fax: (591-2) 241-4123

Eastern Bolivia Agricultural Chamber (CAO) (Cámara Agropecuaria del Oriente)

Casilla 116
Santa Cruz
Phone: (591-3) 352-2200
Fax: (591-3) 352-2621

Forestry Chamber of Bolivia

Prof. Manuel Ignacio Salvatierra 1055
Santa Cruz
Phone: 591 3 333 2699
Fax: 591 3 333 1456
E-mail: camaraforestal@cfb.org.bo
<http://www.cfb.org.bo>

Country Market Research Firms

All market research and consulting companies are required to register with:

National Chamber of Consulting Companies

Edificio Los Jardines, Piso 5, Oficina 5D
Casilla 8560
Phone: (591-2) 244-3819
Fax: (591-2) 244-3819

Commercial Banks

Banco de Crédito Bolivia S.A.

Calle Colon 1308
Casilla 907
Phone: (591-2) 239-1722
Fax: (591-2) 233-2203
<http://www.bancodecredito.com>

Banco do Brasil

Av. 16 de Julio No. 1642
Phone: (591-2) 231-0909
Fax: (591-2) 231-1788
<http://www.bancobrasil.com.br/>

Banco Económico S.A.

Ayacucho 166
Santa Cruz
Phone: (591-3) 336-1177
Fax: (591-3) 336-1184
E-mail: baneco@baneco.com.bo
<http://www.baneco.com.bo>

Banco Ganadero S.A.

Bolívar 99
Santa Cruz
Phone: (591-3) 336-1616
Fax: (591-3) 336-1617
www.bancoganadero.com.bo/

Banco Industrial S.A. (BISA)

Av. 16 de Julio No. 1628
Phone: (591-2) 236-5625
Fax: (591-2) 239-0033
www.bisa.com/

Banco Mercantil S.A.

Calle Ayacucho esq. Mercado
Casilla 423
Phone: (591-2) 240-9040
Fax: (591-2) 240-9362
www.bancomercantil.com.bo/

Banco Nacional de Bolivia S.A.

Av. Camacho esq. Colon No. 1312
Casilla 360
Phone: (591-2) 231-3232
Fax: (591-2) 231-0695
E-mail: info@bnb.com.bo
www.bnb.com.bo/

Banco Santa Cruz S.A.

Junin 154
Casilla 865
Santa Cruz
Phone: (591-3) 336-9911
Fax: (591-3) 335-0114
E-mail: bancruz@mail.bsc.com.bo
www.bsc.com.bo/

Banco Solidario S.A.

Nicolas Acosta No. 289
Phone: (591-2) 248-4242
Fax: (591-2) 248-6533
E-mail: info@bancosol.com.bo
<http://www.bancosol.com.bo>

Banco Unión

Calle Libertad No. 156
Santa Cruz
Phone: (591-3) 336-6869
Fax: (591-3) 334-6869
<http://www.bancounion.com.bo>

Multilateral Development Banks

World Bank

Fernando Guachalla No. 342
Edificio Victor, Piso 9
Phone: (591-2) 215-3300
Fax: (591-2) 215-3305
<http://www.worldbank.org/>

Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)

BISA Building, El Prado, Piso 5
Phone: (591-2) 235-1221
Fax: (591-2) 239-1089
<http://www.iadb.org>

Andean Development Corporation (CAF) (Corporación Andina de Fomento)

Edificio Multicentro, Torre B, Piso 9
Phone: (591-2) 244-3333
Fax: (591-2) 244-3049
<http://www.caf.com/>

U.S. Embassy Trade Personnel

David N. Greenlee
Ambassador

David M. Robinson
Deputy Chief of Mission

Todd Chapman
Political/Economic Counselor and
Commercial Attaché

Colleen Crenwelge
Economic/Commercial Officer

Dovie Holland
Economic Officer

Ramiro Alborta
Economic Specialist

Tabbie Saenz
Commercial Specialist

Luisa San Martin
Commercial Assistant

Luis Ernesto Beccar
Political Specialist

Patricia Viscarra
Legal Advisor

Americo Tadeu
Commercial Counselor
U.S. Embassy Santiago, Chile

Melinda Sallyards
Agricultural Attaché
U.S. Embassy Lima, Peru

Embassy personnel may be reached at
commercelapaz@state.gov.

Washington-Based U.S. Government Contacts

Trade Information Center

U.S. Department of Commerce
Phone: (800) USA-TRADE
Email: tic@ita.doc.gov

U.S. Department of Commerce

Julie Anglin
Bolivia Desk Officer
Phone: (202) 482-0428
Fax: (202) 482-4726
Email: Julie_Anglin@ita.doc.gov

Office of the Coordinator for Business Affairs

U.S. Department of State
Phone: (202) 647-1817
Fax: (202) 647-3953

U.S. Department of State

Lawrence Petroni
Bolivia Desk Officer
Phone: (202) 647-4193
Fax: (202) 647-2628
Email: PetroniLJ@state.gov

Trade Assistance and Promotion Office

Foreign Agricultural Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Phone: (202) 720-7420
Fax: (202) 690-2489
<http://www.fas.usda.gov>

Bolivian Government Representation in the United States

Jaime Aparicio Otero, Ambassador
3014 Massachusetts Av. NW
Washington, D.C. 20008
Phone: (202) 483-4410
Fax: (202) 328-3712
E-mail: webmaster@bolivia-usa.org
<http://www.bolivia-usa.org>

Consulates

Mosies Jarmuz
9100 S. Dadeland Blvd.
Suite 406
Miami, FL 33156
Phone: (305) 670-0709 or 670-0710
Fax: (305) 670-2548

Jorge Heredia Cavero
211 East 43rd St, Room 702
New York, NY 10017
Phone: (212) 687-0530 or 499-7401
Fax: (212) 687-0532

Fernando Francisco Lazcano O.
870 Market Street, Room 575
San Francisco, CA 94102
Phone: (415) 495-5173
Fax: (415) 399-8958

Honorary Consuls

Jaime R. Escobar Claros
1111 W. Superior Street, Suite 309
Melrose Park, IL 60160
Phone: (708) 343-1234
Fax: (708) 343-4290

Diana Galindo de Walker
800 Willcrot, Suite 100
Houston, TX 77042
Phone: (713) 977-2344
Fax: (713) 977-2362

Gloria Steine
20550 Hackamore Rd.
Hamel, MN 55340
Phone: (763) 478-9495
Fax: (763) 478-6631

Russel David Leblang
85 Devenshire Street, Suite 1000
Boston, MA 02109
Phone: (617) 742-1500
Fax: (617) 742-9130

George Handelsman
1401 Peachtree Street, NE, Suite 240
Atlanta, GA 30309
Phone: (404) 522-0777
Fax: (404) 873-3355

Maria Urioste Hensley
1881 Sylvan Avenue, Suite 110
Dallas, TX 75208
Phone: (214) 571-6131
Fax: (214) 651-9514

Jaime Escobar Claros
1111 W. Superior, Suite 309
Melrose Park, IL 60160
Phone: (708) 343-1234
Fax: (708) 343-4290

Thomas J. Purvis
3413 Canacer Drive
Mobile, AL 366693
Phone: (334) 661-2873
Fax: (334) 661-2873

Vacant
210 Park Avenue, Suite 1600
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
Phone: (405) 239-5789 or 239-5726
Fax: (405) 235-585

Market Research

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To view market research reports produced by the U.S. Commercial Service, please go to <http://www.export.gov/marketresearch.html> and click on Country and Industry Market Reports.

Please note that these reports are only available to U.S. citizens and U.S. companies. Registration is required but is free of charge.

Trade Events

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For information on upcoming trade events, please see <http://www.buyusa.gov/bolivia/en/tradeshows.html>

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Chapter 10: Guide to Our Services

The U.S. Commercial Service offers customized solutions to help American businesses enter and succeed in markets worldwide. Its global network of trade specialists will work one-on-one with firms through every step of the exporting process, helping to:

- Target the best markets with world-class research
- Promote products and services to qualified buyers
- Meet the best distributors and agents
- Overcome potential challenges or trade barriers

For more information on the services offered by the U.S. Embassy's commercial section, please go to <http://lapaz.usembassy.gov/english/commercial/goldkey.htm>.

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U.S. exporters seeking general export information/assistance or country-specific commercial information should consult with the nearest **Export Assistance Center** or the **U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Information Center** at **(800) USA-TRADE** or go to the following website: <http://www.export.gov>

To the best of our knowledge, the information contained in this report is accurate as of the date of publication. **The Department of Commerce** does not take responsibility for actions readers may take based on the information contained herein. Readers should always conduct their own due diligence before entering into business ventures or other commercial arrangements. **The Department of Commerce** can assist companies in these endeavors.